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ABSTRACT

The development and evaluation of a curriculum that presents moral dilemmas for primary grade children are discussed. Using the method of sound filmstrips, a set of dilemmas was constructed for stimulating development in primary grade children in the following ways: (1) they present dramatic stories which are enjoyable and involving to watch for children of this age; (2) they present a conflict between two or more values understood by children of this age; (3) they are open--children of this age disagree about what is right and have difficulty making up their minds; and (4) without giving "right answers," they present reasons above the level of most of the children in the class which may help stimulate the child to make his own level of reasoning more adequate. The filmstrips provide stimulation of moral development. The curriculum is divided into five units: keeping promises, telling the truth, respecting property rights, sharing and taking turns, and understanding the reasons for rules. Each unit contains two moral dilemmas. The teacher's role is to stimulate a moral discussion of the dilemma. A preliminary pilot study being carried out to evaluate this curriculum is in the process of testing the following hypotheses: (1) intervention in the form of filmstrip dilemma presentation and discussion will cause significant change in moral development level compared with a comparison group; and (2) both "expert-led" and "teacher-led" groups will not differ significantly from each other, but their mean amount of change will differ from that of the control group. Six second-grade classrooms are participating in the experiment. Three dilemmas are appended. (DB)

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An Evaluation of a Curriculum for Primary Group Children Based On Cognitive-Developmental Theory of Moral Reasoning

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Part 1: Theory and Curriculum Development.

A cognitive-developmental approach to moral education emphasizes the child's ability to reason increasingly adequately about moral problems. This emphasis on reasoning is supported by research findings which suggest that mature moral reasoning is displayed by children who act in genuinely moral ways. (A review of the research referred to in this article can be found in a recent article by Kohlberg and Selman called A look at moral education in the schools [1972].) For example, a child whose only reason for doing "the right thing" is to avoid punishment will frequently fail to do "the right thing" when no one is watching. If a child's reason for doing "the right thing" is a concern for the welfare of others, this is much less likely to be true. Recent research in developmental psychology indicates that there is a natural path through which all children's moral reasoning must pass, a path through a series of stages. Passing from no clear awareness of moral rules (ages two to four), the child of five to

seven focuses upon rules as something to be obeyed apart from their social meaning, primarily to avoid punishment (Stage 1 of morality). The child moves on to a sense of fairness as "the same for you and for me" (Stage 2) and at the end of the primary years to a third stage of concern about the welfare of others and "for putting yourself in the other guy's shoes" (Stage 3). Further stages of development are attained in the late elementary and high school years (See Table 1).

The theory behind the curriculum described in this paper is basically the cognitive-developmental theory of value-education of John Dewey. Elaborated by Piaget, it has been developed in research and tested by Kohlberg and his associates at Harvard University. Following the same children over a fifteen-year span, and studying children in other cultures, it has been found that all children go through the same sequence of moral stages. The sequence is invariant because each stage stems from the previous stage and prepares the way for the subsequent stage. Children may move through these stages at varying speeds and may be found half in and half out of a particular stage. A child may stop at any given stage and at any age, but if he continues to progress, he must move in accord with these steps.

Research indicates that higher stages cannot be directly taught to children at much lower stages. Children exposed to reasoning more than one stage above their own translate them into ideas at their own level. Furthermore, these changes in stages of thinking take time, they do not

occur overnight. The use of the term stage should not be taken to imply that the changes in thinking that a child goes through are instantaneous, but that stages are a series of qualitatively more adequate ways of looking at moral problems.

Movement to a higher stage requires the experience of conflict or difficulty in the child's attempt to apply his current level of thought to moral problems. It also requires an exposure to the next level of thought. It involves a sense of active participation in the social problem-solving process and the opportunity to take the role of others, to see their point of view when it differs from his own. This research on stages of moral development implies a new approach to value-education which is non-indoctrinative. If it is true as research indicates, that moral thought passes through this natural sequence of stages, a moral education program of any type (filmstrips, readings, classroom discussion) should focus on helping the child reach the next step of development rather than direc'ly teaching him fixed rules and values of the adult world. Stimulation of development as an aim avoids the critical objection to value education that the teacher has no right to indoctrinate children with her particular values, which may be different than those of the child and his family. The existence of moral stages indicates that there is progression to greater moral awareness which teachers and researchers can define independent of their particular cultural and religious affiliation.

As we have just mentioned, according to cognitive-developmental theory, two basic mechanisms are necessary for moral stage development. First, the child must experience the social situation as a moral dilemma, he must feel some conflict or indecision over what is the right or moral action. Second, exposure to moral reasoning slightly more adequate than his own (one stage above) may facilitate development to the next stage.

It has been shown in various studies (Kohlberg and Turiel, 1972) that higher stages of moral reasoning relate positively to moral behavior, and that educational intervention using the developmental principles of conflict and near matching (presenting reasoning one stage above) can lead to significant upward stage movement in a variety of settings (junior high and high schools, young men and women in prisons (Blatt and Kohlberg, 1972; Hickey, 1972).

However, this approach has never been formally tested in the primary grades. While, in theory, the developmental principles of change should work regardless of the age or stage of the population under study, different age groups present different problems to research and curriculum development. There have been two unsolved issues which, until now, have left primary grade value education relatively barren of sound educational curriculum.

First, the dilemma approach successfully used to instill conflict in junior high and high school students needed modification; dilemmas relevant for older children were neither interesting nor relevant to primary graders.

More appropriate dilemmas needed to be developed, a task which takes time and some degree of skill. Second, the oral or verbal presentation of hypothetical dilemmas was not appropriate for younger children who had difficulty grasping the details and social facts crucial to the construction and understanding of the dilemma. A more explicit, visual presentation of dilemmas was needed to hold the attention of young children.

Using the method of sound filmstrips,[1] we have recently constructed a set of dilemmas suitable for stimulating development in primary grade children in the following ways:

1. They present dramatic stories which are enjoyable and involving to watch for children of this age.
2. They present a conflict between two or more values understood by children of this age.
3. They are open - children of this age disagree about what is right and have difficulty making up their minds.
4. Without giving "right answers," they present reasons above the level of most of the children in the class which may help stimulate the child to make his own level of reasoning more adequate.

Footnote[1]: Guidance Associates, Pleasantville, New York.

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The filmstrips are designed to stimulate moral development by way of a number of features. The first and most important feature is that they are designed, through presenting provocative dilemmas, to elicit discussion and debate among the children. Second, they present children with moral dilemmas which encourage the child to separate extraneous reasons (e.g., punishment) from moral reasons in decisions and so to develop better reasons for moral choices. Third, they present reasons one stage above the level of the child to aid in this process. These are the conditions which make children think, and promote fruitful discussion.

The curriculum is divided into five units which focus on moral topics of importance to primary grade children: a) keeping promises, b) telling the truth, c) respecting property rights, d) sharing and taking turns, and e) understanding the reasons for rules. Each of these units contains two moral dilemmas. Both dilemmas leave the choice up to the children in the class. In the first of the two dilemmas, reasons pro and con are presented to the main character, the one who must make the choice, by the other characters in the dilemma. Some of these reasons will be at a lower level than that of the child in the classroom, some will be at the same stage, and some will be at higher stages. Using such a format helps the child to focus on reasoning and makes it likely that the child is exposed to the stage just above his own, a procedure which may provide impetus for moving on to the next stage.

The teacher's role, in this curriculum approach, is to stimulate a good moral discussion of the dilemma. The first problem for the teacher is to get a lively discussion going, the second problem is to guide such a discussion in a way which may stimulate development.[2] To stimulate discussion, it is useful to break the students into buzz groups or small discussion groups of four or five children mixed in terms of sex, their personality characteristics and their views as to what choice should be made in the dilemma. The teacher can move from group to group asking questions and keeping the discussions relevant. The primary problem in getting lively discussion going is a lack of disagreement on what should be done. When the children agree on what should be done by the hero, the teacher may ask related questions on which children may not agree.

The implication of this approach to moral education is that the teacher can best view herself as a moral guide, and see her primary task as helping the child: 1) focus on the conflicts, 2) think about the reasoning he uses in solving such conflicts, 3) see inconsistencies in his way of thinking, and 4) find means of resolving such inconsistencies.

Footnote[2]: The process of running moral discussion groups is discussed in a teacher training filmstrip which accompanies the First Things: Values curriculum.

Part 2: An Approach to Curriculum Evaluation.

Over the past two years, developmental psychologists at Harvard's Graduate School of Education have collaborated with curriculum specialists to develop appropriate moral dilemmas for primary grade children, dilemmas which could be presented in such a way as to gain their attention and initiate the kind of discussion in which the participating child can reflect upon his own moral reasoning.

Having completed this task, we have begun to evaluate this curriculum. Specifically, we have begun to test in a preliminary pilot study the following hypotheses:

1. Intervention in the form of a filmstrip dilemma presentation and discussion will cause significant change in moral developmental level compared with a comparison group which does not receive the treatment.
2. More specifically, although the amount of change may be greater with a teacher familiar with the stage theory (expert-led) using the material than when used by a lay teacher who has only read the manual and instructions, it is hypothesized that both the "expert-led" and "teacher-led" groups will not differ significantly from each other but their mean amount of change will differ from that of the control group.

Our design is as follows:

Subjects

Subjects are sixty-eight second graders, half from an integrated blue collar and half from a middle-class school district in the Cambridge, Massachusetts Public School System. Subjects are divided equally by sex.

Procedure

Six classrooms are participating in the experiment. While entire classes are being exposed to the program, random samples of children within each class have been selected to be interviewed as subjects.

Three schools are represented to increase the generalizability of the results. In School 1, one class is randomly assigned to each of three treatments: expert-led, informed-lay teacher led, and control. In School 2, one class each is assigned to either an expert-led or an informed-lay led group. To estimate and control for carry-over effects from treatment classroom children who communicate casually with control group children, a second control group is being drawn from a third school geographically but not demographically separate from the second.

The design is summarized as follows:

Expert-led group	Informed-lay led group	Control group
School 1 6 female 6 male	School 1 6 female 6 male	School 1 5 female 5 male
School 2 6 female 6 male	School 2 6 female 6 male	School 3 5 female 5 male

Interviews are being conducted three times: once in the fall before the instructional program, once in the winter after the program, and at the end of the school year (to determine long-term effects).

Treatment Procedure

The filmstrip presentation to the group is only a small part of total instruction. The remaining portions involve asking the children what should be done to resolve the dilemma, reasons for each choice, and debate about whether some reasons are better than others. Thus, individual participation is the essential part of the program, and the unit of analysis is the individual child.

The experimental groups begin following the pretesting of all subjects. They meet twice a week, each session running for approximately 30 to 40 minutes. Each week both dilemmas from one of the five units are presented to the class, one at each session. During the introductory experimental session, the experimental groups are shown Part 3 of the training filmstrip (the model discussion and debate which uses Part One of the unit on telling the truth). After this orientation, the order of presentations is as follows:

Week 1	Truth telling (Day 1 - Part 3 of teacher training filmstrip).
Week 2	Sharing and taking turns.
Week 3	Promise keeping (Day 5 - pretest instrument as intervention).
Week 4	Property rights.
Week 5	Rules (one session) (Day 10 - students present own dilemmas to class).

During the first meeting of week three, the dilemma which is being used in the pre- and post-test is discussed. Placing this dilemma equidistant in time from both pre- and post-test interviews will lessen the chances of boredom on the part of the subjects.

During week five, both parts of the rules dilemma is used in one meeting. The second meeting of that week has the subjects present their own dilemmas.

The "expert teachers" have had training in moral developmental theory as well as experience with primary grade children. The lay teachers are simply using the teacher's training guide.

Instruments

The basic evaluation is a comparison of moral stage among experimental and control groups. Three moral dilemmas are being used to evaluate the intervention program: one based directly on situations in the filmstrip series, one dilemma analogous to one of the filmstrip situations but not identical with it, and one standard dilemma used in previous research on moral development.

These dilemmas can be found in the appendix. On the pretest, subjects discuss Dilemma 1 (F.S.D.[2] - promises) and Dilemma 2 (taking turns). On

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Footnote[2]: F.S.D. indicates that the dilemma is also used in the filmstrips.

the post-test all subjects rediscuss Dilemma 1 and in addition receive Dilemmas 2 (turns), and 3 (life versus property rights). Issues within the moral domain which are scored by moral stage analyses are:

1.) The child's conception of punishment and punitive justice (Dilemmas 1 and 3).

2.) The child's conception of sharing and distributive justice (Dilemma 2).

3.) The child's conceptions of the value of human and animal life (Dilemmas 1 and 3).

Summary

Pretest	Post-test	Post post-test
1, 2	1, 2, 3	1, 2, 3

This choice of dilemmas allows us to examine differences in moral stage change as related to the instrument itself. For example:

a.) What is the effect of filmstrip intervention upon moral stage using dilemmas on which subjects are both pre- and post-tested (Dilemmas 1 and 2).

b.) If there is change in dilemmas that are discussed during the intervention (Dilemma 1), does this generalize to new moral dilemmas (Dilemma 3).

c.) What is the effect on moral stage in dilemmas which are also part of the intervention (Dilemma 1) as compared to those which are not (Dilemma 2).

d.) What is the effect of having been evaluated on a dilemma in both pre- and post-test (Dilemma 2) as compared to only the post-test (Dilemma 3).

Because some of the dilemmas are duplicated in pre- and post-testing and some are not it is necessary to establish both reliability and validity coefficients for the dilemmas. This is done in the following manner.

Test-Retest Reliability

- correlating the mean scores of filmstrip dilemmas on the control group's pre- and post-testings.
- correlating the mean scores of standard dilemmas on the control group's pre- and post-testings.

Inter-Rater Reliability

- correlating two judges' scores on both the filmstrip dilemmas and the standard dilemmas for both pre- and post-testing.

Content Validity

- a determination of the correspondence between the filmstrip materials, interviews and classroom discussion with Kohlberg's moral judgment definitions.

Concurrent Validity

- a correlation between the filmstrip dilemmas and the standard dilemmas.

Construct Validity

- whether or not children who have elements of the stage next highest to their own are influenced by the filmstrip to move up one stage in their moral judgment.

Analyses of Results

Both quantitative and qualitative analyses will be performed on the data. Each subject will be given a quantitative moral maturity score based upon the moral judgment interview which will be scored according to Kohlberg's scoring procedure for moral judgments. Mean change in moral maturity will be compared across groups. Subjects will also be scored qualitatively as either at one of Kohlberg's stages (e.g., Stage 1) or as a subject who appears to be in transition from one stage to the next (e.g., Stage 1/2). Comparisons will be made of the effects of the interventions in "stable" versus "transitional" subjects.

We expect to have some preliminary results analyzed by the Spring of 1973, and a final analysis by next summer. These results will be a preliminary but important indicator of the value of a primary grade curriculum which focuses on moral reasoning.

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TABLE 1

Classification of Moral Judgment into Levels and Stages of Development

Levels	Basis of Moral Judgment	Stages of Development
I.	Moral value resides in external, quasi-physical happenings, in bad acts, or in quasi-physical needs rather than in persons and standards.	Stage 1: Obedience and punishment orientation. Egocentric deference to superior power or prestige, or a trouble-avoiding set. Objective responsibility. Stage 2: Naively egoistic orientation. Right action is that instrumentally satisfying the self's needs and occasionally others'. Awareness of relativism of value to each actor's needs and perspective. Naive egalitarianism and orientation to exchange and reciprocity.
II	Moral value resides in performing good or right roles, in maintaining the conventional order and the expectancies of others.	Stage 3: Good-boy orientation. Orientation to approval and to pleasing and helping others. Conformity to stereo-typical images of majority or natural role behavior, and judgment by intentions. Stage 4: Authority and social-order maintaining orientation. Orientation to "doing duty" and to showing respect for authority and maintaining the given social order for its own sake. Regard for earned expectations of others.
III	Moral value resides in Conformity by the self to shared or shareable standards, rights, or duties.	Stage 5: Contractual legalistic orientation. Recognition of an arbitrary element or starting point in rules or expectations for the sake of agreement. Duty defined in terms of contract, general avoidance of violation of the will or rights of others, and majority will and welfare.

TABLE 1

(Continued)

	Stage 6: Conscience or principle orientation. Orientation not only to actually ordained social rules but to principles of choice involving appeal to logical universality and consistency. Orientation to conscience as a directing agent and to mutual respect and trust.

DILEMMA ONE

Promise-Keeping Versus Value of Life

Holly is an eight-year-old girl who likes to climb trees. She is the best tree-climber in the neighborhood. One day while climbing down from a tall tree she falls off the bottom branch but does not hurt herself. Her father sees her fall. He is upset and asks her to promise not to climb trees any more. Holly promises.

Later that day, Holly and her friends meet Shawn. Shawn's kitten is caught up in a tree and can't get down. Something has to be done right away or the kitten may fall. Holly is the only one who climbs trees well enough to reach the kitten and get it down but she remembers her promise to her father[1].

Should Holly help Shawn by climbing the tree to get the kitten down?

Why do you think that is what Holly should do?

Footnote [1]: If using the filmstrip to tell the dilemma, stop the audio and visual at Frame 36.

DILEMMA TWO

Fairness in Taking Turns

Gladys has waited all week to go to the movies. On Saturday, her parents gave her some money so she can see a special movie in town that will only be there one day. When Gladys gets to the movie theatre, there is already a long line with many children waiting to buy tickets. Gladys takes a place at the end of the line.

All of a sudden, a big wind blows the money out of Gladys' hand. Gladys leaves the line to pick up her money. When she gets back, there are lots more people in line and a new girl named Mary has taken her place. Gladys tells Mary that she had that place and asks Mary to let her back in line. If Mary does not let Gladys in line, Gladys will have to go to the end of the line and there may not be enough tickets left and she won't get a chance to see the movie.

Should Mary let Gladys back into the line?

Why do you think that is what Mary should do?

DILEMMA THREE

Value of Life Versus Stealing Rules Adapted from Standard Moral Dilemmas for Purpose of Analysis of Perspective-Taking Element

In Europe, a lady was dying because she was very sick. There was one drug that the doctors said might save her. This medicine was discovered by a man living in the same town. It cost him $200 to make it but he charged $2,000 for just a little of it. The sick lady's husband, Bill, tried to borrow enough money to buy the drug. He went to everyone he knew to borrow the money. But he could borrow only half of what he needed. He told the man who made the drug that his wife was dying, and asked him to sell the medicine cheaper or let him pay later. But the man said, "No, I made the drug and I'm going to make money from it."

Should Bill try to save his wife's life by stealing the drug if stealing is the only way that he can save her life?